

REMARKS

This paper is filed in response to the final office action mailed on May 4, 2005. Because this amendment raises no new issues, reduces the total number of claims and places all claims in a condition for allowance, entry of this amendment under Rule 116 is earnestly solicited.

Claims 9, 31 and 38 have been canceled; claims 10-29 are withdrawn; claims 1, 2, 32, 35, 39 and 42 have been amended; claims 30-33, 36, 37-40 and 43 are allowed; claims 1-2, 4-5, 7-8, 30, 32-33, 35-37, 39-40 and 42-43 are pending.

The Office Action objects to claims 31 and 38 as redundant of claims 30 and 37, respectively. In response, claims 31 and 38 have been cancelled. In addition, claims 32 and 39, which are dependent on cancelled claims 31 and 38, respectively, have been amended to depend from claims 30 and 37.

Claims 35 and 42 stand rejected as indefinite, each for depending upon a claim which has been cancelled. Claims 35 and 42 have each been amended to traverse this rejection.

Turning to the rejections based upon the prior art, claims 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,803,594 ("Fredrickson") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,426,888 ("Gnaedig") or over Fredrickson in view of Gnaedig further in view of Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-300071 ("Kono"). In response, claim 1 has been amended to traverse these rejections. Specifically, claim 1 has adopted the limitations of allowable claim 9. The Examiner has stated that claim 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim. Because claim 1 recites the same limitations which would be found in claim 9 if it were written as an independent claim, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is allowable. Further, because independent claim 1 is allowable, claims 4, 5, 7, and 8, which are dependent thereon, must also be allowable.

Next, the Examiner has objected to claims 2 and 9 as dependent on a rejected base claim. Since amended claim 1 includes all of the limitations of claim 9, the latter claim has been cancelled. In addition, claim 2 has been amended to eliminate redundant limitations and Applicant submits that claim 2 is allowable as dependent on amended claim 1.

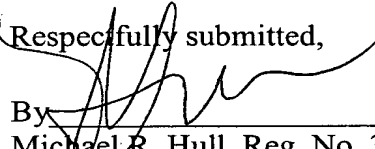
Finally, in response to the Examiner's reminder that before the application can pass to issue, claims 10-29 must be cancelled, Applicant cancels claims 10-29.

An early action indicating the allowability of claims 1-2, 4-5, 7-8, 30, 32-33, 35-37, 39-40 and 42-43 is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 13-2855.

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Respectfully submitted,

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